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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[726] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out [781] [65] sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to [839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

attempted adultery. This practice (poéré) found many victims, and its suppression by the French was a real service to the Mossi, who were formerly murdered for a trifle. An ogling glance at a chief's wife was punishable by death. A man who met one of the wives of the Mogho Naba on the road was executed along with the wife. If one met a napagha [royal wife], he left the path and took to the bush. The woman herself would run off and return to the road only when she was sure that the man was a long way off.

Such is naturally no longer the case, and the wives of the Mogho Naba on their way to the market at [66] Ouagadougou no longer expect not to be looked at or even jostled. I hasten to add, however, that the Mossi still retain great respect for them and will even swallow serious insults, such as tampiri, "bastard," from a napagha if they are so unlucky as to offend them.

(c) Daporé Naba, chief of the section of the free or house slaves. It was formerly the duty of the Daporé Naba and his followers to massacre any pages or other convicted persons whose execution had been ordered by the Mogho Naba.

(d) Bend'Naba, chief of the drummers of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), the drummer who always accompanies the warriors and who, therefore, even in time of peace, is allotted a horse.

If the enemy appears to be winning during a battle, the Soré Naba kindles the courage of the warriors of the Mogho Naba and constantly asks for a head, m'data zougou. This means that he is asking each warrior to forget himself and to think only of victory. In order to have a victory, the enemy must suffer such losses that they decide either to retreat or to surrender. Thus, the expression m'data zougou implies ruthless slaughter.

(f) Tansoba or Tampsoba, the war chief. The Tansoba of the Mogho Naba lives in a small village, Moussa, in the province of the Baloum Naba.

[67] When there is friction between the Mogho Naba and one of his vassals and there seems to be no hope of agreement, the Mogho Naba sends to the Tansoba for logdo (warriors armed with arrows). The Tansoba at once proceeds to Ouagadougou and stops at Baoghin. The emperor assembles his ministers and the principal dignitaries of his court and says to them: "I never thought that chief X, to whom I myself gave the pougla (red fez) would dare to

342 is continued, and the process goes on until the hut is completed, that is, when it reaches a height of about 1.65 meters. The house is built without any openings, but when the walls are up, a [219] low door is put in, having the shape of a pointed arch. The interior of many Mossi houses is divided by a low wall, called kogré, which makes the hut very dark. A few small holes are made with the handle of a daba, and these, with the low door, are [726] the only openings. In time of war, the Moaga used to shoot his arrows through these tiny holes. Before the roof is put on, the [751] walls are daubed with wet ashes, a practice which is supposed to guarantee good health for the new inhabitants.

The roof is conical in shape. It is made with poles which are tightly tied at the top with vines. Stiff mats, zarsé, are placed on the poles. They are held in place with fibers and are covered with braided straw. Some twenty persons are needed to put up the roof. The construction of the house is then finished. Only the plastering remains to be done. For this job, the women collect a special kind of earth, boalga, which they mix with manure from cows or horses and then coat the walls with it. When this operation is completed, the women cover the floor with a ferruginous material that is sprinkled with water and tamped down with bits of flat wood called silpama. After the floor has been smoothed down, the sasgo is the next step. This involves covering the surface with a sticky material, boudou, mixed with ground charcoal. This is rubbed over and over with glass sherds or special stones called sassega. The shiny black surface obtained in this fashion prevents the ferruginous material from soiling the family's clothes. Some [824] people sprinkle the finished floor with kanmé, an infusion made of the skin of the néré fruit, in order to make it wear well.

[220] Construction workers. The master of the house is aided by his own brothers and other relatives in the same clan. He does not request help from outsiders. The women's job is to get the water needed for the mortar.

The earth used in building is taken from a hole near the house, the tan-nako (from tando, "earth," and nako, "hole"). This excavation is later filled with all the waste from the house and ordure from the courtyard. The tan-nako, well fertilized in this manner is planted with maize, and this field is called the kamanga.

651 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his
661 wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs,
661 as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the
431 naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

726 the end. A man appointed for the task carried this flag in the front line of battle. He was never to look back and always to walk forward, and he bore no weapons other than a bow and arrows. If he was killed, another man took his place. When a village was besieged,
727 all the spoils devolved by right to the naba, who took /24/ his choice and left the rest to his men. All able-bodied men who could still fight and who refused to become slaves were put to death; the old men were spared, and the women and children reduced to slavery. The naba became master of all the slaves taken by cavalrymen mounted on his own horses. If any disagreement arose about a capture, the naba seized the prize; if the individuals concerned managed to reach an agreement, they shared the booty amicably. Those who had seized a horse or a slave on their own initiative could keep it, but more often than not they offered part of their prize to the naba in order to avoid difficulties. The war did not end with a peace treaty. It ceased when the loot was considered sufficient. The Gourounsi and Bousansé countries thus were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.

692 The nabas did not merely administer their lands and collect taxes; they also dispensed justice, civil and criminal. The village chief usually judged a case of first instance, but the convicted party could appeal the sentence to the canton chief and through him to the province chief, or he might even resort directly to the latter. The judges were always assisted by assessors, the village elders for the petty nabas, the ministers for the province chiefs. Criminals were judged as promptly as possible, and the accused were subjected to imprisonment only while awaiting the arrival of witnesses. They were allowed to name their own witnesses, and these were summoned.

No questioning similar to that of our examining magistrates preceded the session. Everything took place openly, and anyone could speak up whenever he pleased. Torture was not employed to obtain incriminating confessions, but sometimes was used to unmask false witnesses. Sons were not allowed to testify in favor of their father, nor slaves and servants in favor of their master: their testimony might too easily be biased.

In case of dispute, there was no trial by ordeal nor intervention by a sorcerer. The judge did not put the witnesses under oath, but a litigant could say: "If I lie, may I fail to rise from here (that is, may I die)." If someone accused of being indebted to a recently deceased individual denied this debt, the heir could lead him to the

3. Finally, a third lot, composed of young girls and young boys, was distributed among the warriors and put into their charge. The boys will be employed until further notice as grooms to the warriors; later on, those who prove themselves useful and docile will be kept. The others will be sold at the first opportunity. The girls will be given in marriage to warriors who distinguish themselves.[24]

The military campaigns of the Mossi, in contrast to their slave-raiding expeditions, appear to have been well organized. When the Mogho Naba felt that a war was necessary, he summoned his five provincial ministers and the Tansoba to a parley. If war was decided upon, the Tansoba was given full charge of all operations. This man, chosen from a hereditary clan of warriors who lived in a village called Tansob'tenga in Sapone district, was listed among the Mogho Naba's courtiers but seldom appeared at court unless war was imminent. His duties as chief warrior were considered so dangerous that he constantly sought out religious practitioners for supernatural aid. Nevertheless, a war minister who was good and brave was not expected to live very long. If he did live to become gray-haired, the other courtiers made fun of him by pretending that his graying head could only be the result of his having carried a sheep captured in warfare on his head as a present to the ruler.

Once given a mandate for war, the Tansoba collected his magico-religious apparatus and prepared the requisite sacrifices. He then asked the provincial ministers to notify the district chiefs to assemble with their warriors under the leadership of the local Tansobadamba, who were often members of the Tansoba clan. When the district chiefs received this notice, they beat their *zongagondo* (war drums), and the local administrators sent orders for men to the village chiefs. The village chiefs, in turn, beat their war drums to summon their noble cavalrymen and commoner foot soldiers, who came armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords, and clubs, with or without iron tips. The tips of the sharp weapons were often covered with a vegetable poison derived from a shrub of the Strophanthus species. Some of the men also carried guns after firearms were introduced among the Mossi from the desert region and from the coast. Many carried rawhide shields.

As soon as the village contingents had assembled and had gathered their provisions, they marched to the district centers. Then they proceeded either to the place of battle or to Ouagadougou. In the latter case, they became part of the royal army and were joined by the forces of those princes who were prepared to honor their obligation to the Mogho Naba. For example, when the French invaded Ouagadougou in 1896, the Boulsa Dim sent his prime minister "at the head of an army to aid Mogho Naba

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Wobogo. However, he did not have to intervene, because while still en route he heard that Ouagadougou had fallen."[25] Thanks to this type of aid, the Mogho Naba was able to gather quite a large army, a fact that contradicts Crozat's belief that the Mogho Naba was a "king without an army."[26]

The early Mogho Nanamse used to accompany their armies into the field, but this practice was later abandoned and was revived periodically only by the more adventurous rulers. (The last ruler to die in warfare was Mogho Naba Doulougou [ca. 1800].) However, it was the Mogho Naba's duty to greet the army when it came to Ouagadougou, to beat the royal war drum, and to turn the troops over to the Tansoba. This officer served as commander in chief of the army, and was assisted by the Gounga Naba, a provincial minister, who served as his aide-de-camp. The Gounga Naba was expected to die rather than retreat in battle, especially if the Tansoba was killed. Two other ministers, the Kamsaogho Naba and the Larhalle Naba, also accompanied the army. The later Baloum Nanamse did not venture into battle, because they had to attend to the personal needs of the Mogho Naba. In early times, however, they accompanied their sovereigns into battle and fought alongside them. The Ouidi Naba never went to war, because it was his duty to look after the kingdom. He had to ensure the interests of all the people even if the royal army was defeated, the country invaded, and the ruler killed or forced to flee. The Samande Naba went to war and served as chief of the infantry.

Scouts preceded each district contingent as the army marched off to battle. Within the contingent, the younger warriors marched in front, followed by older men. It was the duty of the more experienced warriors to make sure that the younger men did not break ranks and run under the stress of battle. Behind the foot soldiers came the cavalry, composed of nobles and of the few commoners who possessed horses. Behind these came the district chief, surrounded by his own palace guard. Several heralds known as *yumba* (sing. *yuma*) accompanied the district forces to exhort them to fight. As the men marched to battle the yumba shouted:

> Men! Your ancestors were not slaves. They were men. They were stronger than anyone else. They did not bathe with water; they bathed with blood. Do you wish to return home to drink millet water and eat bread? Never! A man does not eat bread or drink millet water; a man fights. Your ancestors were not afraid of anyone; you must not be afraid of anyone. Even if you are killed today, you must march ahead, beat your enemies, and take their villages. You must not be afraid!

Mossi armies on the march used scouts to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy or for any evidence that he was aware of impending attack. The tactics these scouts used to avoid detection, such as camouflaging themselves

with leaves and branches and crawling upon the ground, can be witnessed even today at Mossi funerals where men re-enact warfare practices. Whenever possible, the Mossi preferred to take the enemy by surprise, but this was seldom possible when large-scale fighting and massive preparations were involved.

When two Mossi armies drew up to each other, the heralds from both sides issued such challenges and epithets as: "If you men do not wish to die, you should run or you will never eat again. We will have your blood to wash with." In the meantime, the Tansobadamba on both sides deployed their forces in accordance with the number of men available, the spirit of the enemy, and the nature of the terrain. From the description of warfare given to me by an old Tansoba in Nobere district, it appears that the strategy most commonly used was to split the infantry in two while attacking, thus making room for the cavalry to charge through. If the initial charge was successful, the attack was maintained, but if it failed, the army usually turned about and fled. Despite their braggadocio, Mossi commanders seldom insisted that their troops fight against overwhelming odds. However, shame over impending defeat often induced such officers as the Tansoba and the Gounga Naba to fight to the death. For example, during the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma in 1897, the Boulsa army lost so many men that the Boulsa Dim wanted to commit suicide in his humiliation. However, he was prevented from doing so by one of his subordinates.[27]

Soldiers wounded by poisoned spears or arrows extracted the projectiles if possible, and kept on fighting until they died. Even if they were wounded by an unpoisoned weapon, they did not seek medical aid. Most wounded men believed that they were doomed, because their protective amulets had failed them. For the same reason, a defeated army fleeing a battlefield made no attempt to retrieve its dead and dying, but left them to the vultures. When an army was victorious, however, the Mossi either carried their dead home for burial or buried them on the battlefield, saving some item of their clothing or equipment for the funeral.

Victorious Mossi armies usually pursued the enemy, burning villages as they went. The soldiers killed all the infants and the infirm, and when they fought against non-Mossi, they captured young people to be sold as slaves. Then they collected all the available booty and departed hurriedly, fearing that the confiscated cattle and slaves would slow their return and enable the rallied enemy to catch up with them.[28] If the army could not return home before dark, camp was set up for the night near a body of water so that the Tansobadamba could offer thanksgiving sacrifices. Pickets were later

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[52]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[53]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[54] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.